

Social and Emotional Affects of Dual Enrollment Accelerated Programs

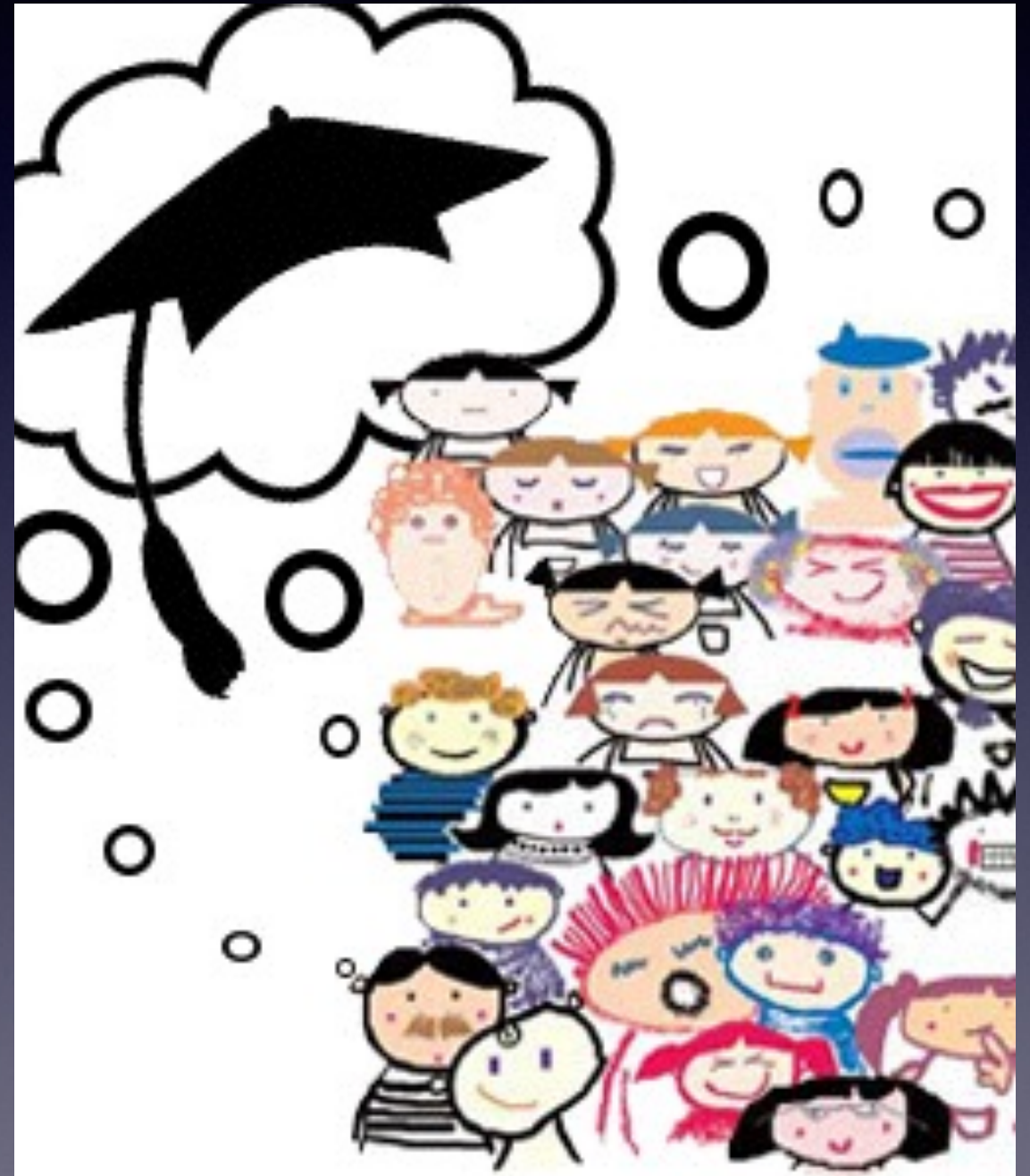
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Introduction

- **Our school implemented a new dual enrollment acceleration program this year for gifted students. The students have the opportunity to take their core classes in the 9th and 10th grade which allows them to take college courses during the 11th and 12th grade.**
- **After listening to some of the students talk about how much pressure they feel due to their schedules, I was impressed to conduct a study to analyze how acceleration affected the students socially and emotionally. I have witnessed students having meltdowns due to stress and feel it is important to understand the challenges they face in order to better help them academically.**

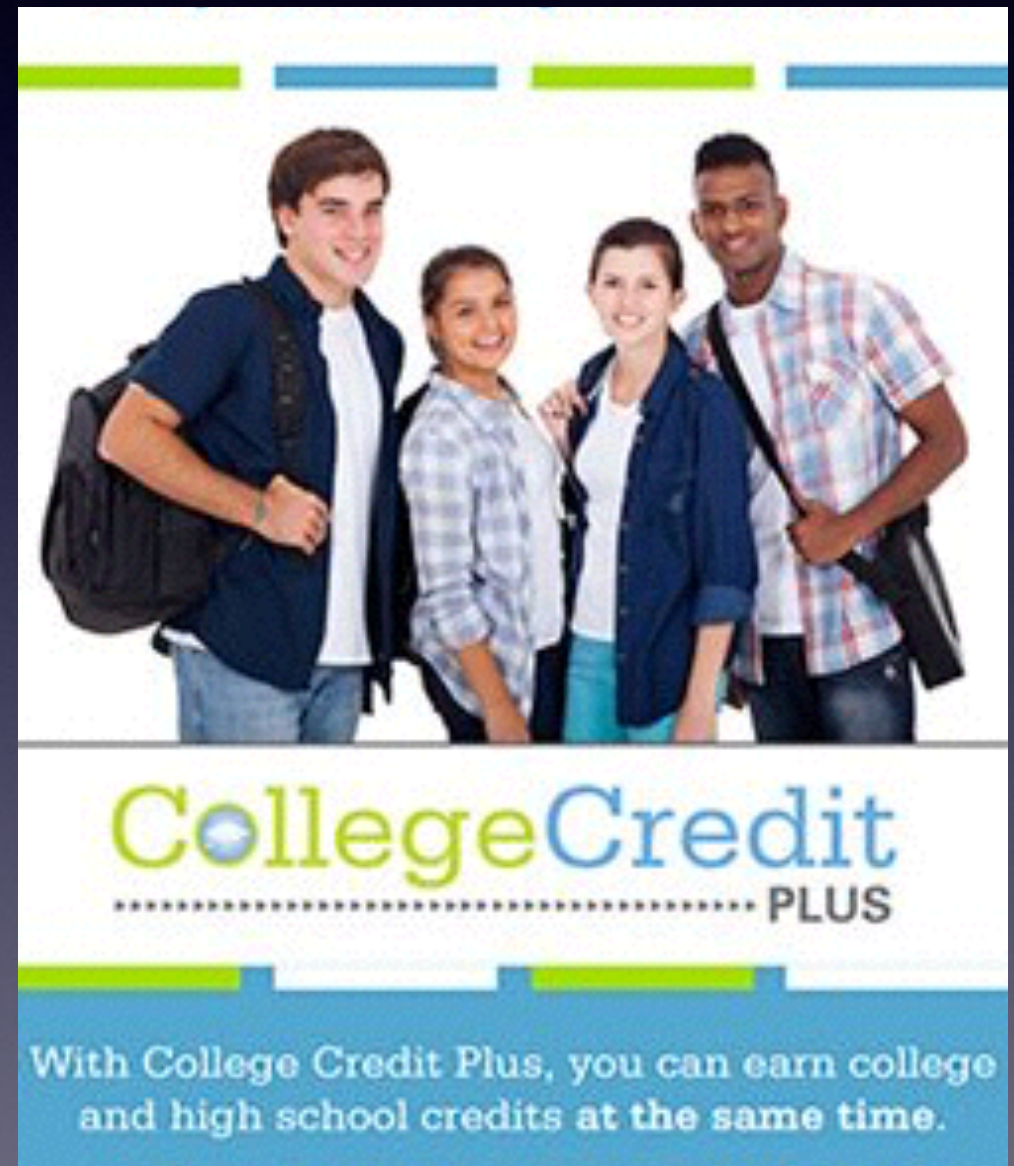


Purpose

- The purpose is to investigate the academic and social/emotional impact of dual enrollment acceleration of gifted high school students in two Honors Math II classes.

Research Questions:

1. What are the primary reasons students chose to participate in the dual enrollment acceleration program?
2. What are the social/emotional issues students face due to participating in the dual enrollment acceleration program?
3. Do students feel participating in the dual enrollment program has been a positive experience?



Problem and Participants

- **Impact of dual enrollment acceleration on Math II Honors students both socially and emotionally.**
- **Gifted honor students enrolled in a Honors Math II class who are participating in a dual enrollment accelerated program.**
- **Program allows enrolled students the opportunity to complete core classes during their ninth and tenth grade years in order to focus on college classes during their eleventh and twelfth grade years. The whole population enrolled in two Honors Math II classes will be sampled which is approximately 50 to 60 students.**
- **Setting will be South Lenoir High School, a public high school in Deep Run, North Carolina serving approximately 800 students in grades 9-12.**



Importance of the Issue

Opponents/Cons:

- **Acceleration can use undue stress to the students or cause social problems. Some students felt with their academic requirements they were constantly stressed in regards to managing their demanding academic schedule as well as their extracurricular activities. They expressed concern that they did not have sufficient time to fulfill their academic, social, and family obligations (Rawlins, 2004; Shaunessy-Dedrick, Suldo, Roth, & Fefer, 2015).**
- **One student stated: “I have football five days a week. So I’m just so tired after football. It’s hard to must up all the will and to just study a little bit” (Shaunessy-Dedrick, Suldo, Roth,a & Fefer, 2015).**



Importance of the Issue

Proponents/Pros:

- **Positive influence academically from acceleration in high school mathematics with no risk to social and emotional development. The participants felt they were held to a higher academic standard and they thrived under the higher expectations.**
- **They were motivated by the increased workload and did not feel their increased level of work affected them socially or emotionally (Rawlins, 2004; Neihart, 2007; Hannah, James, Montelle, & Nokes, 2011; Richardson, & Benbow, 1990; Vogl, & Preckel, 2014; & Kolitch & Brody, 1992; Assouline, Colangelo, Heo, & Dockery, 2013).**
- **The study by Rawlins (2004) found that students do not feel their social-emotional development will suffer from undue stress.**



Research Findings

- **Steenbergen-Hu and Moon (2011)** examined the effects of accelerated learning on the academic achievement and social-emotional development of high-ability learners. The study was conducted between 1984 and 2008 using thirty-eight primary studies. The author placed the results into categories depending on their developmental levels and comparison groups. The findings of the study were consistent with previous studies suggesting that the acceleration of the courses had a positive impact on the learners' academic achievement. There was also a positive correlation between accelerated courses and the social-emotional development of students.
- **Tsai (2007)** investigated how effective acceleration was in gifted learners. When students first come to a class, they have different levels of knowledge and behaviors that will affect their learning. The study was conducted on gifted underachievers as well as students involved in compacted curriculum in math. The research showed that parents feel that acceleration is working for their children, but the students feel differently. While some are okay with it, others feel they are having problems adjusting to their new environment of peers. This is due to the lack of peer friends and difficulty regarding peer relationships.



Research Findings

- **Rawlins (2004) examined participant's point of view regarding acceleration program in mathematics. Using audio tapes that were analyzed using a narrative analysis, the academic and social/emotional effects of mathematics on students in the accelerated program or who had dropped out of the program.**
- **Results indicated that students found participation in the acceleration beneficial to their learning. This was even the consensus of the students who withdrew from the program. They felt that if they had not participated in the program, they would have been bored without the challenges acceleration presented.**
- **Kolitch and Brody (1992) investigated the precollege mathematics preparation of gifted students who had been accelerated in mathematics. The research study examined how well they prepared for the courses that were being taken out of their normal grade level.**
- **The results show that despite the acceleration of the classes, overall student achievement was high in the courses. They prepared for their classes and embraced the challenges of the classes. The students in this study felt that it was important for students to advocate for their individual learning and search for more opportunities to expand their learning.**



Additional Research Findings

- **Acceleration of the courses had a positive impact on the learners' academic achievement.**
- **Positive correlation between accelerated courses and the social-emotional development of students.**
- **Parents feel that acceleration is working for their children, while some students feel differently.**
- **Lack of peer friends and difficulty regarding peer relationships.**
- **Students found participation in the acceleration program beneficial to their learning.**
- **Students felt if they had not participated in the program, they would have been bored without the challenges acceleration presented.**
- **Despite the acceleration of the classes, overall student achievement was high in the class.**
- **Students felt it was important to advocate for their individual learning and search for more opportunities to expand their learning.**

Limitations/Weaknesses

- While there are studies about the academic and social/emotional effects of acceleration, there are limited studies regarding the impact of gifted students eligible for acceleration who choose to remain in the regular classroom.
- I was unable to locate studies regarding students who are dissatisfied in regular classes and want to be in accelerated classes but this option is not available to them (Rawlins, 2004; Pierce, Cassady, & Adams, Neumeister, Dixon, & Cross, 2011).



Study's Focus

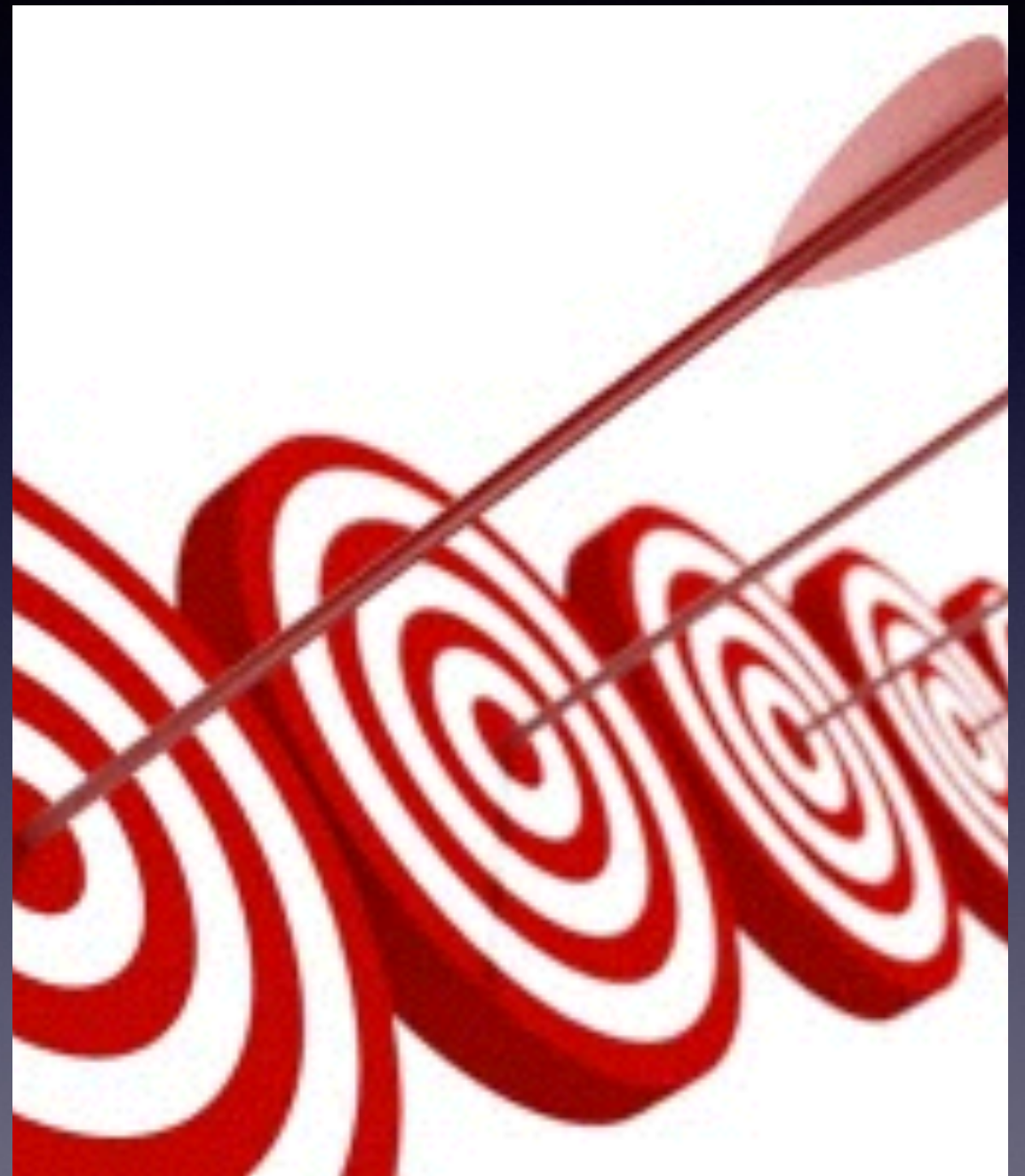
- **The academic and social/emotional effects of dual enrollment acceleration of gifted students in high school mathematics. The design for the study will be quantitative using survey methods with two groups completing questionnaires relative to their experience in accelerated programs.**
- **Interviews will be conducted with randomly selected parents of the students surveyed. The surveys and interviews will help establish what impact the accelerated program has on the social and emotional aspects of the students' lives.**
- **Rawling claims that “although research evidence for enrichment is limited, it points to positive effects both in academic and non-academic areas” (2004). It is expected from the study by Rawlings (2004) that the research will show students do not feel they suffer from any undue stress due to the accelerated program.**
- **This design is likely to yield results that will be useful to educators in gifted education as they strive to meet not only the academic needs of their students, but also their social and emotional needs.**
- **This program is a new program in the school, and information regarding the feelings and well being of the students is imperative in order to ensure this program is a success. The data will provide insight into how they feel the program has affected them personally.**

Study Details/Procedures

- **The study is being conducted to collect data regarding how the accelerated program affects the social and emotional aspects of the students.**
- **After obtaining the parents' permission for their student to participate in the study, the students will be given a questionnaire to complete. This questionnaire will provide insight into the affects the accelerated program has on them socially and emotionally.**
- **There will also be interviews conducted with parents randomly selected from the students who participate.**
- **The data from the questionnaires and interviews will be organized according to responses to the categories on the questionnaire. The topics on the questionnaire will determine the categories in which to place the responses.**
- **The result from the categories will be combined into different phrases that depict the results. These results will be used to determine how well students in the accelerated program are adjusting socially and emotionally. The data will be analyzed to detect phrases that are similar in the students' responses.**
- **Notes will be written and organized based on the categories that will be organized from the student responses.**

Reliability and Validity

- There will be multiple sources of information including the data from the student questionnaires and the parent interviews.
- There will be member-checking, as students will write their own responses to questionnaires. The students will review their questionnaires before their responses are used to establish the categories for the chart from their phrases or topics.
- A potential threat to internal validity is the accuracy of the students' responses. There is no way to control the answers they will provide and if they will be honest in their responses.
- Notes and transcripts of the parent interviews will be reviewed as another source to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.



Student Questionnaire

- **What was your primary reason for participating in the dual enrollment accelerated program?**
- **Do you feel additional pressure from being in the accelerated program?**
- **How has being in the accelerated program affected you socially?**
- **How has being in the accelerated program affected you emotionally?**
- **Do you feel your friends who are not in the program treat you differently?**
- **How has your participation in the accelerated program been a positive experience?**
- **What has been the hardest part of being in the accelerated program?**
- **Do you feel you are held to a higher standard than students who are not in the accelerated program?**



What was your primary reason for participating in the dual enrollment accelerated program?

Reasons for participating:

- College - 56%
- Challenging/Faster Pace - 22%
- Challenging/College - 12%
- Learn More - 10%



Do you feel additional pressure from being in the accelerated program?

- Yes, there are additional pressures from being in the program - 73%
- No, there are no additional pressures from being in the program - 20%
- Sometimes I feel pressure - 7%



“Yes, pressure is added on us to be the best. We are even more work and expected to make a 4.0 GPA. Parents and teachers separate us from the non-honors kids in many ways.”

How has being in the accelerated program affected you socially?

Majority felt the program:

- Hasn't affected me socially
- Has affected me socially

Other responses:

- Pressure
- More of an introvert
- More sociable with smart and responsible people



“My social time has been cut. I have been in the accelerated program since 3rd grade, my weekends do not consist of friends, but homework and school work. I do not mind however, I am okay with working hard.”

How has being in the accelerated program affected you emotionally?

Affected emotionally by accelerated program:

- Yes - 80%
- No - 20%



“It has been a very stressful time for me. Stress is involved in my everyday life, and it has created issues such as anxiety. I have higher levels of anxiety now, affecting my everyday life.”

Do you feel your friends who are not in the program treat you differently?

Friends treat you different:

- Yes - 67%
- No - 33%
- Some friends felt they were smarter and asked for help on homework. Most said their friends were in their classes.



How has your participation in the accelerated program been a positive experience?

- More educational opportunities
- Shows I am smart and can do the work
- Get further ahead in school
- Pushes students to reach potential
- Self-improvement
- Challenging work
- Great learning experience



“My participation in the accelerated program has done many positive things for me. I feel like it has pushed me to be my best. I love being in honor classes.”

What has been the hardest part of being in the accelerated program?

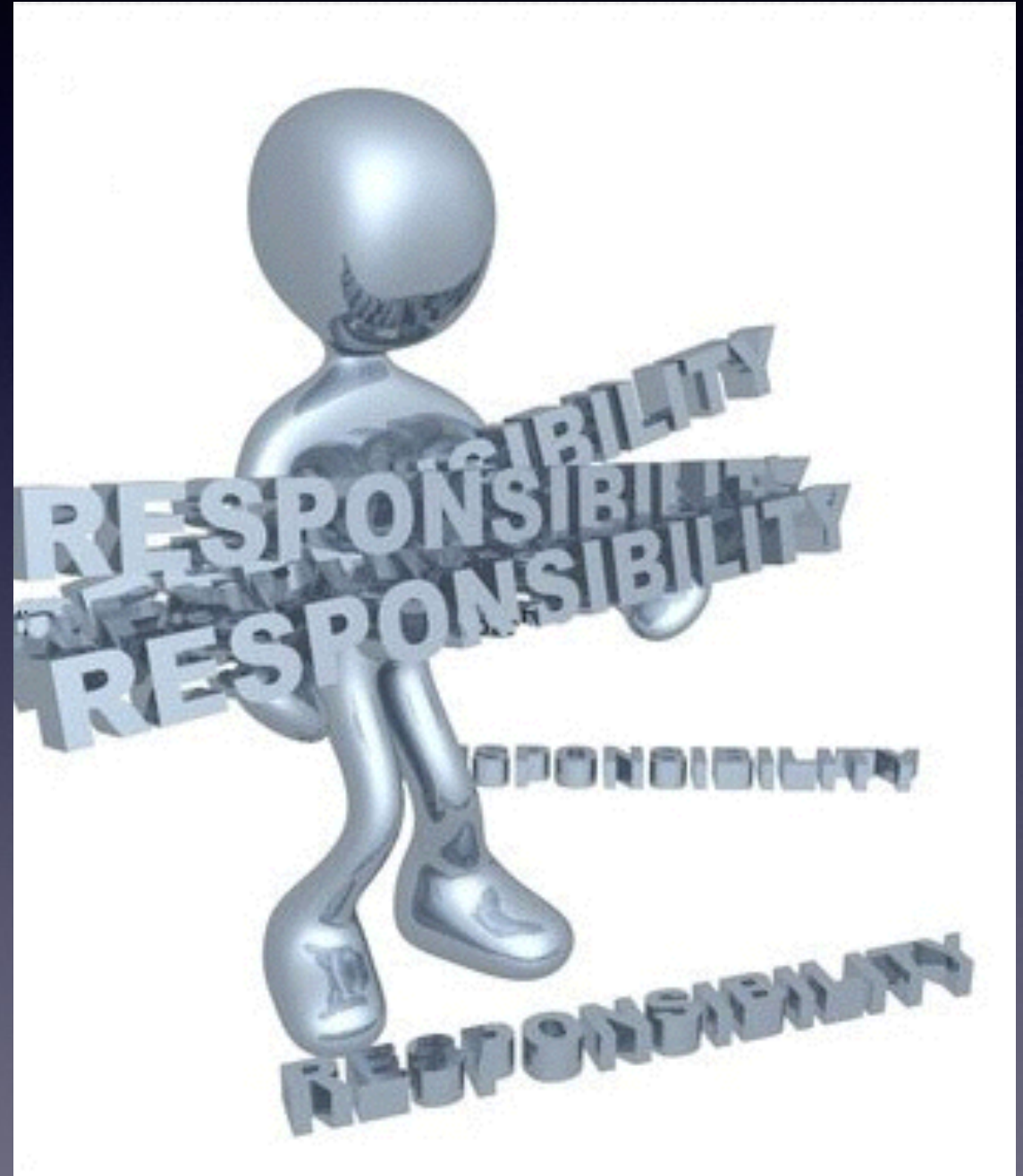
- Work load
- Stressful
- Dealing with other peers
- Back to back projects
- Adjustment to high school and honor classes
- Understanding material
- Time management
- Lack of sleep
- Teachers



Do you feel you are held to a higher standard than students who are not in the accelerated program?

Held to higher standard:

- Yes - 83%
- No- 17%



“Yes, more is expected out of me. I am okay with that, I take the challenge of the faster moving courses, so I am expected to do more. It is not because I am “smarter” — I just move at a faster pace.”

Parent Interview Questions

- Do you feel your child has benefited from participating in the accelerated program?
- What was the primary motivator for allowing your child to participate in the accelerated program?
- How do you feel being in the accelerated program has affected your child socially and emotionally?



Do you feel your child has benefited from participating in the accelerated program?

- Beneficial to the future because it will allow students to finish high school courses early and focus on college classes
- Chance to graduate with an Associates Degree

Dual Credit Program



What was the primary motivator for allowing your child to participate in the accelerated program?

- Students' desire to participate in the program. If the students do not desire to be in the program, then they should not participate.
- Opportunity to save money on college courses while enhancing educational opportunities.



How do you feel being in the accelerated program has affected your child socially and emotionally?

- Affected more emotionally than socially since most have friends in the classes
- Worries more about grades and school work because they know they have to stay ahead of the game
- Made them stay on task more to keep from getting behind
- More dedicated to their education



Results of Research

- Students feel pressure from being in the accelerated program
- Majority of the students do not feel they have been affected socially by dual enrollment in the accelerated program
- Majority of the students do feel they have been affected emotionally by dual enrollment in the accelerated program
- Parents expressed the same concerns as students

Contribution to Teachers

- **Gain insight into emotional affects of acceleration on students**
- **Gain insight into social affects of acceleration on students**
- **Provide opportunities to customize learning for students**
- **Provide opportunities to develop relationships between students**
- **Allow students to express their feelings regarding different situation**



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